



# Bennington County Regional Commission

## Minutes

Thursday, October 24, 2024

4:00 PM

**Bennington County Regional Commission Offices, Bennington, VT  
and via Zoom**

**Commissioners Present:** Nick Zaiac (Arlington), Dixie Zens (Sunderland), John LaVecchia (Rupert), David McAneny (Dorset), Gordon Black (Manchester), Donald Campbell (Bennington), Martha Cornwell (Shaftsbury), Dana Rozycki (North Bennington), Sheila Kearns (Sandgate), Harry Lux (Landgrove)

**Public Present:** Tyler Yandow, Jennifer Fells, Tom Fells, Mary Rogers, Ned Perkins, Becky Manning, Robert Nowak, Thomas Scheetz, Elias Schroeder, Carolyn Alderman, Tom Hunton, Steve Lennox, Joey Kulkin

**BCRC Staff:** Bill Colvin, Callie Fishburn, Janet Hurley, Samantha Page, Jim Henderson

### **1. Shaftsbury Enhanced Energy Plan Public Hearing**

Nick Zaiac moved to open the hearing, Donald Campbell seconded the motion. Callie Fishburn gave an update on the process of compiling the plan with the Town of Shaftsbury in 2023-2024. BCRC verified the plan's compliance with Act 174 using a tool that outlines state standards.

Dixie Zens moved to close the hearing, and Donald Campbell seconded.

Colvin requested ballots from any commissioners who had not yet voted and noted the results will be announced after the third public hearing.

### **2. Regional Plan Public Hearing**

Nick Zaiac moved to open the hearing, David McAneny seconded. Janet Hurley presented on the regional plan update and explained that the current Bennington Regional Plan is due to expire in early 2025. This is meant to be a quick update that precedes a more substantial update that will be Act 181-compliant. This version of the regional plan updates census data, energy data, and economic development data, among other areas. It also includes new maps throughout. There is an implementation matrix at the end of the plan to outline specific policies, responsibilities, potential partners, and potential funding sources. The Future Land Use map included in the plan is updated, but not yet compliant with Act 181.

This plan is HOME Act-compliant, which means it includes housing targets for municipalities that are based on statewide housing needs assessment. The target range for the Bennington Region

(BCRC service area) is around 852-1,413 new housing units. BCRC staff asked municipalities for their average annual housing permits from past the 5 years, and also factored in the availability of water and wastewater infrastructure and the potential for infill development. The plan's housing targets include a breakdown of housing types by number of units, number of bedrooms, and type of tenure.

Callie Fishburn presented on the Bennington Regional Energy Plan, a chapter within the overall regional plan. This plan has also been verified to meet Act 174 standards and is consistent with state energy policies. This updated version is shorter than the current energy plan and uses new data, renewable energy generation targets and siting maps, and includes an emphasis on equity.

The full regional plan is available on the BCRC's website. This is the first of two public hearings; the second will be held on November 21 at the Park House in Manchester at 6 PM. Anyone can email comments and questions up until then, and then BCRC will plan to have a vote on adoption after the close of the 11/21 hearing.

Hurley and Fishburn responded to questions from the commissioners and the public.

Dixie Zens moved to close the hearing, and Nick Zaiac seconded.

### **3. Intermunicipal Service Agreements Public Hearing**

Nick Zaiac moved to open the hearing, and Dixie Zens seconded. Bill Colvin explains that municipalities throughout the state can enter into agreements to share services. Most other RPCs now have amended their bylaws to be able to enter into intermunicipal service agreements. This is enabled by statute and is completely voluntary for the municipalities that decide to participate. Colvin shared the proposed changes to the BCRC Bylaws as well as the process outlined in Vermont statute which governs both the process for amending the bylaws to enable RPCs to enter intermunicipal agreements and the processes required to enter and maintain such agreements.

The comment period on this proposed bylaw changes runs through November 5, and the commission will vote on November 21 (requires 67% approval).

Dixie Zens moved to close the hearing, and Sheila Kearns seconded.

### **4. Shaftsbury Enhanced Energy Plan ballot results**

Bill Colvin read the results of the vote on the Shaftsbury Enhanced Energy Plan. There were 14 votes total: 11 municipal commissioners voted in favor, 1 alternate voted in favor, and 2 special commissioners voted in favor. The ballot item passes.

The meeting adjourned at 5:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Colvin

Director